



ABU'L-'ALĀ' GANJAVĪ

ABU'L-'ALĀ' GANJAVĪ, NEẒĀM-AL-DĪN MAḤMŪD, 6th/12th century poet at the court of Kāqān Faḵr-al-dīn Manūčehr Šervānšāh. He is also referred to as Ostād-al-šo'arā', an allusion to the fact that two more illustrious poets, Falakī and Kāqānī Šervānī, were among his pupils.

Internal evidence from his poetry indicates he was born between 490 and 500/1096-1106 (B. Forūzānfar, *Soḵan va soḵanvarān*, Tehran, 1312 Š./1933, II, p. 323). He entered the Šervānšāh's service at age forty-four (ibid.) and was instrumental in introducing the young poet Kāqānī to the king. Later Abu'l-'Alā' was accused of divulging his master's secrets, and this prompted him to defend himself in a *qaṣīda* dedicated to the king. This poem, the most complete one surviving, is preserved in at least three versions. (For the longest, sixty lines, see Šo'ā'-al-molk Šīrāzī in *Armaḡān* 14, 1312 Š./1933, pp. 705-13; for the others, see *Haft eqlīm* III, p. 301; *Majma' al-foṣaḡā'* I, p. 200). About 100 lines of his poetry are scattered in biographical dictionaries (*taḍkeras*). A *qaṣīda* of thirty lines, a panegyric to eight Shī'ite imams, is also attributed to him; but, as Šo'ā'-al-molk has shown, its style and diction clearly indicate its more recent composition.

Abu'l-'Alā' is known to have quarreled with his son-in-law and former pupil, Kāqānī, whom he satirized in a poem. Kāqānī retaliated with a much more severe attack, accusing his former teacher, apparently without foundation, of Isma'ili tendencies (*Toḥfat al-'erāqayn*, ed. Y. Qarīb, Tehran, 1335 Š./1956, p. 235). The date of Abu'l-'Alā's death is given as 554/1160 (Šāleḡ Eṣfahānī, *Šāhed-e ṣādeq*, in *Yādgar* 2, 1324 Š./1945, no. 26-27) and, less credibly, 571/1174 (Šo'ā'-



al-molk, op. cit.).

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